

## INDIA

**Gadgil, D. R.** *Women in the Working Force in India*. Kunda Datar Memorial Lectures 1964. London, 1966. Asia Publishing House. Pp. 33.

THIS IS THE inaugural lecture under the auspices of the Kunda Datar Memorial Lecture Series instituted by the University of Delhi.

Very little is known about the extent and pattern of the employment of women in India. There was no uniform definition of worker in the 1951 and 1961 censuses, so that intercensal comparisons are not possible and hence for the lecture the author has mainly drawn upon the data of the 1961 census and the recent surveys done in the country.

The 1961 census showed thirty-three million women as cultivators. This figure was derived from the definition of worker which would be open to various interpretations in practice. In case of seasonal work like cultivation a worker was defined as one who "had some regular work of more than one hour a day throughout the greater part of the working season". Keeping these limitations of data in mind, we find that women's participation in economic activities varies a great deal from state to state, there being 85 females to 100 male workers in cultivators' families in Maharashtra and less than fifteen in West Bengal. The social conventions relating to outdoor work by women play an important role, and non-participation of women in economic activities and especially in manual work is considered to add to social prestige among cultivators. But social sentiments are not so important as regards agricultural labour provided by women of the lower Hindu castes, the scheduled castes and tribes. Moreover among these groups there is also strong economic pressure in favour of women seeking employment. The difference is noticed in the results that taking the whole of India there were 50 female workers per 100 male workers in cultivators' families, whereas there were 82 female agricultural labourers per 100 male agricultural labourers.

With regard to the employment of women in urban areas, recent surveys in Kanpur and Lucknow showed that most of the women migrate to the cities with the head of their

family or on marriage, and though a great majority of them were employed in agriculture in the villages they stopped working after migrating to cities. The 1961 census also showed that a very small proportion of women were working in the cities, the percentages of female workers among total workers being 8.6 in Greater Bombay, 6.2 in Delhi, and 5.7 in Calcutta.

In urban areas the women are generally in relatively simple patterns of employment, work in less skilled and technically less advanced industries, or are in domestic service. Recently there is some evidence of a growth of employment of women in government service, business and professions, though all this affects only the small minority of the educated and the middle class women.

Our present understanding about the employment of women and the changes that are taking place in it with economic development is not well advanced due to lack of data. As Professor Gadgil points out, the weight of evidence on farm business and rural life and labour suggests that in the last decade no changes in the structure or in the magnitude of operation have taken place on a scale that could bring about large real changes in female workers' participation in agricultural business.

This lecture raises many thought-provoking issues regarding employment of women in the country, which deserve serious consideration from all those interested in the policies of social reconstruction.

SAVITRI THAPAR

**Boute, Joseph. S.J.** *La Démographie de la Branche Indo-Pakistanaise d'Afrique*. Société d'Etudes Morales, Sociales et Juridiques. Louvain-Paris, 1965. Nauwelaerts. Pp. 404. Price FB.500. \$10.

THE AUTHOR, WHO is a member of the select group of those who are expert in demography as well as theology, here analyses the vital statistics of Indians and Pakistanis living in Africa—and also in other areas overseas from Asia. He has done so in the general expectation that these overseas communities might represent a form of demographic development which